CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1   Background

Communication is not only the essence of being human, but also a vital property of life (Piece, 1934). It means that our life is attached to communication every hour, everyday and the entire time. In this case, language plays a most important role.

People communicate to express their thought, gratitude, sorry, need, feeling, etc. However, since there are so many languages that exist in the world, recently, people need to speak more than one language to interact with other. Based on the reason, bilingualism is inevitable. Therefore, when people speak more than one language, they may mix or switch words between the languages. Loan words, borrowings, code switching, code mixing, adoptions and other language interactions are the consequences of bilingualism.

Nevertheless, from the language interactions mentioned above, this study focused only on code switching. In this case, Auer (1998) suggested that code switching is a term in linguistics referring to using more than one language or dialect in a conversation. Meanwhile, Crystal (1987) stated that code, or language, switching occurs when an individual who is bilingual alternates between two languages during his/her speech with another bilingual person.

Although it is considered normal and natural in our interactions that code switching occurs in daily speech, on the radio, and even on television, however, there is still less number of research focused on code switching in writing (Hakim, 2000). This research paper looked up at a case study of code switching involving Indonesian bilinguals in the friendster network community. This comments column in the friendster profile appeared to stimulate switching. Nevertheless, the concern of the study was only to analyze the switching using languages between English and Bahasa Indonesia. The study identified the types of code switching that appear in the friendster comments and observed the possible reasons why that users did code switching the friendster comments.

Apart from that, friendster is like a Circle of Friends (social network) in virtual communities and demonstrates the small world phenomenon. It was founded in Mountain View, California by Jonathan Abrams in March 2002. Designed as a dating service, friendster requires users to craft Profiles that indicate demographic information, interests and relationship status along with a photograph and a self-description. Users signal their relationships with others by mutually referencing the others' Profile. Such relationships are marked as Friends and appear on both users' Profiles. By adding Friends and comments, Friendster shifts the typical dating profile. (retrieved from Wikipedia at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Friendster).

Apparently, in the site, friendster users often switch words, phrases, sentences from one language to another. For the writer found that the users craft words in languages, in which, it leads to the occurrences of code switching; the study is inspired him to conduct a research on it. Code switching, as Spolsky (1998) said, it

occurred between or within sentences involved in phrases, words, or parts of words. Code switching can also appear on several language levels including syntactic, phonological and morphological levels.

Hence, within this linguistic study it is expected that the writer and so the readers can get more information and a comprehension on the area of code switching. Moreover, this study could help them in recognizing the types and also possible reasons of code switching.

1.2   Statement of the problems

The present study examines the phenomenon of code switching in friendster comments. The research problems are formulated in the following research questions:

a) What types of code switching occur in the friendster comments?

b) How often does each of these types of code switching occur in the friendster comments?

c) What are the reasons for the users to code switch the language in the friendster comments?

1.3   Aims of the study

The study is aimed at:

1. Finding out what types of code switching occur in friendster comments.

2. Finding out the frequency each types of code switching occur in friendster comments.

3. Finding out the possible reasons why that friendster users often code switch the language in their comments.

1.4   Scope of the Study

This present study analyzes some selected comments in friendster site at a current time. The writer chooses the friendster site, because he is interested in the way of people in the site communicate to each other users using a written language. It seemed to the writer that they were like playing words or languages in their own way. It is found that many sentences in the friendster comments are grammarless, and yet, friendster users do understand to what each others are saying. The comments samples from 10 friendster users' profile are going to be analyzed. The 10 friendster users' profiles were chosen randomly from "my connections" list in the writer's friendster profile. The comments would be recorded from March to April 2008. This study limited the analysis only for the comments that using code switching between Bahasa Indonesia and English.

1.5   Significance of the Study

To many people today, bilingualism has become a common issue in life. In this new era of globalization, one to be able to speak English as a second/foreign language is necessary. It is a consequence of cultural contact between two language communities and more, so that people have to become bilinguals. Borrowings, loanwords, and code switching are the products of these interactions.

In the present study, concerning the topic of code switching in the friendster comments since it appears frequently among Indonesian friendster users, this study examined users' writing behavior in which they switch language from Bahasa Indonesia to English. There is indication that they do not realize that they actually have done a linguistic action called code switching. The results of the study are expected to give the reader more information about code switching, and also to inform readers that code switching also appears in written language, including in the network site like friendster.

This study tries to discover what types and how often the code switching occur in the friendster comments. In addition to that, this study also attempts to find out possible reasons for users to do code switching. Hence, it is expected that the discussion of this study can enrich the data to any further research on code switching. Therefore, it leads to the readers' awareness of code switching, including types, functions, and reasons of code switching

1.6 Clarification of the Main Terms

In order to comprehend the notions underlying the title of this research paper, some terms are clarified as follow:

Friendster :   It is an Internet social network service. It designed as a dating service; users are required to craft Profiles that indicate demographic information, interests and relationship status along with a photograph and a self-description. By adding Friends and comments, Friendster shifts the typical dating profile.

(retrieved   From Wikipedia at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Friendster)

Friendster Profile :   An informal biography or a concisely presented sketch of the life and character of a person.

(retrieved   From Wikipedia at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Friendster)

Comments :   A written declaration certifying to a person's character, conduct, or qualifications, or to the value, excellence, etc., of a thing; a letter or written statement of recommendation.

(retrieved   From Wikipedia at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Friendster)

Friendster Users :   Members of the friendster site

1.7 Paper Organization

The paper of the research will be organized as follows:

1. Chapter I (Introduction)

   Within the chapter are background of the study, the statements of problem, aims of the study, the limitation of the study, methodology, and organization of the paper.

2. Chapter 2 (Theoretical Framework)

   This chapter deals with the theoretical outlines that are related with the study.

3. Chapter 3 (Research Method)

   This chapter elaborates the way of conducting the study. It also deals with the statements of the problem, method of the research, data collection, instruments and procedure.

4. Chapter 4 (Data Presentation and Discussion)

   This chapter mainly deals with the data representation. This chapter also discusses data findings.

5. Chapter 5 (Conclusion and Suggestion)

   This is the last chapter of the study which consists of two parts. The first part puts forward conclusion from the result of the findings and discussion in the previous chapter. The second part puts forward the suggestion that is expected to give benefits and inputs for the readers who are interested in linguistics, code switching in particular.